

Message Text

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47

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 PC-04 DRC-01 NIC-01 /157 W

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R 042045Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1650

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 7265

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV BL

SUBJ: PAZ ESTENSSORO CHALLENGED IN ELECTIONS FOR MNR

COMMAND IN LA PAZ

REF: LA PAZ 7177

1. ON OCTOBER 3, VICTOR PAZ ESTENSSORO ANNOUNCED THAT RAUL ROCA HAD WON ELECTION AS CHIEF OF THE MNR DEPARTMENTAL COMMAND IN LA PAZ. THESE ELECTIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE ON NOVEMBER 30 WERE MARKED BY CONSIDERABLE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE (INCLUDING ONE DEATH) AND CHARGES OF FRAUD.

2. ROCA RAN WITH THE SUPPORT OF VICTOR PAZ AND MANY ELEMENTS OF THE PARTY BUREAUCRACY. HIS OPPONENT JAIME ESCOBAR QUIROGA, A MEMBER OF THE "JAIME OTERO CALDERON" CELL OF THE PARTY, RAN ON A COMBINED SLATE WITH RETIRED GENERAL JAIME BILBAO, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE "GUALBERTO VILLARROEL" WORKING GROUP. THE ESCOBARBILBAO SLATE WAS CREATED AS A TACTICAL ALLIANCE OF TWO FACTIONS WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY CONTENTED SEPARATELY FOR LEADERSHIP OF OTHER MNR DEPARTMENTAL COMMANDS IN ELECTIONS HELD EARLIER THIS FALL. THE SLATE RECEIVED THE BACKING OF NATIONAL YOUTH AND WOMEN'S COMMANDS OF THE MNR
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AS WELL AS SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FROM FACTORY WORKERS'S ARTISANS'

AND CHAUFFEURS' CELLS OF THE MNR IN LA PAZ. VARIOUS SOURCES HAVE INFORMED THE EMBASSY THAT THE ESCOBAR-BILBAO TICKET ALSO RECEIVED FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT FROM THE GOB.

3. BOTH SIDES CLAIMED VICTORY AS THE ELECTION COMMITTEE TURNED THE INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS OVER TO VICTOR PAZ. SUPPORTERS OF ESCOBAR BELIEVED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED SO MANY VOTES THAT PAZ COULD NOT SIMPLY AWARD THE ELECTION TO ROCA, FOR TO DO SO WOULD RISK SERIOUS DISAFFECTION IN THE PARTY. NEVERTHELESS, PAZ DID AWARD THE TITLE OF CHIEF TO ROCA, AND THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT ESCOBAR AND BILBAO WILL CONSTITUTE THEMSELVES AS THE "DEPARTMENTAL COMMAND OF THE RESISTANCE OF THE MNR."

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE TRUE VOTE COUNT WILL PROBABLY NEVER BE KNOWN, THE STRONG SHOWING OF THE ESCOBAR-BILBAO SLATE DEMONSTRATED A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE TO PAZ. THE ELECTIONS HAVE COST THE MNR A DEGREE OF UNITY AND COHESION ALTHOUGH IT WILL TAKE A WHILE TO ESTIMATE THE FULL IMPACT.
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